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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION: FIELD COLLECTION OF NAMES

Toponymic field work completed in Canada since 1990

Paper submitted by Canada**

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The Strategic Plan of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) recognizes field work as a fundamental aspect of the gathering of locally-used names. To help monitor this important activity, the CPCGN, through its Advisory Committee on Toponymy Research, maintains a record of geographical names field work undertaken in Canada and maps this information in various formats for the use of CPCGN members.

History

In 1990, CPCGN members were anxous to obtain a picture of areas in the country where geographical names field work had been undertaken (often in the 1960s and 1970s by extensive field survey programmes). At the same time, they wished to see where it was judged by members that field work was needed to upgrade the quantity and accuracy of current official names. This information was collected from each provincial and territorial CPCGN member and plotted on two maps of Canada, with the 1:50 000 National Topographic System (NTS) map grid superimposed. In this way, a good visual portrayal was made of when and where field work had been done, on the one hand, and areas where it was considered necessary, on the other hand.

The meta data for completed geographical names field work was subsequently updated on an annual basis, and a multicolour map produced to show the decade when field work was undertaken and the rigour of the endeavour.

In the mid 90s, this information was put into a digital data base so that a greater variety of simpler maps could be generated.

Attached map

Based on the National Topographic System (NTS) 1:50 000-scale map grid, the areas where field work has been undertaken from 1990 to fiscal year 1996/97 are shaded in black.

The three maps show field work, considered by the various provincial and territorial names jurisdictions, to fall into one of the following types:

(a) "Systematic field collection" .... showing map sheet areas where field work has been undertaken in a thorough and complete (i.e. comprehensive) way, aiming to collect all names for all geographical features

(b) "Partial field collection" .... showing map sheet areas where the field collection of names falls short of being comprehensive (e.g. only part of the map sheet was covered; or only some names were gathered)

(c) "Independently recorded local names" .... showing map sheet areas where recording of local names is known to have been undertaken independently, but the results have not yet been reviewed or integrated into official names records.

General observations

- With decreased financial resources available for the gathering of names in the field, discussion has taken place between CPCGN members to clarify what constitutes "field work". In particular, do telephone surveys constitute field work? As a result of these discussions, the following working description concerning "field work" is now currently before the CPCGN.

  > "A toponymic survey undertaken to record geographical names by means of interviews and/or correspondence with local residents familiar with the geographical features of a given area."

- Discussions on extent and accuracy of field work have provoked thought on field work methodology, as suitable for today's toponymy programmes.

- In future, the CPCGN will maintain two (rather than three) types of maps - namely,
  (a) "Comprehensive field work" (i.e. replacing "Systematic field work")
  (b) "Partial field work"
  The "Indepently recorded local names" will be assimilated into either (a) or (b), depending on the nature of the work undertaken.

- The system of data collection for field work coverage was started in a manual setting, and was directed at the particular task of identifying areas where field work was needed. As a result, the information now available to the CPCGN has its shortcomings for today's reporting purposes. Efforts will be made to upgrade these data files and to eliminate some of the problems. For example, the differences between calendar and fiscal year data will be addressed. More important to correct (by improved data storage) is the updating process which has caused some earlier "systematic" surveys to be overwritten by later "partial" surveys. That approach may have been useful in identifying recent field work coverage, but is not helpful in assessing the completeness of existing names data.

- The CPCGN has now accumulated data which permit interesting graphical outputs to show field work done in the 1990s, the 1980s, the 1970s, and previous to 1970. This collection of material facilitates members' review of their own data collection and comparison with the work done elsewhere in Canada.

Previous records

A brief document on toponymic field work completed in Canada, 1987 - 1992, was filed as an Information document, WP 27, at the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, New York, 1992.

Completed Toponymic Fieldwork

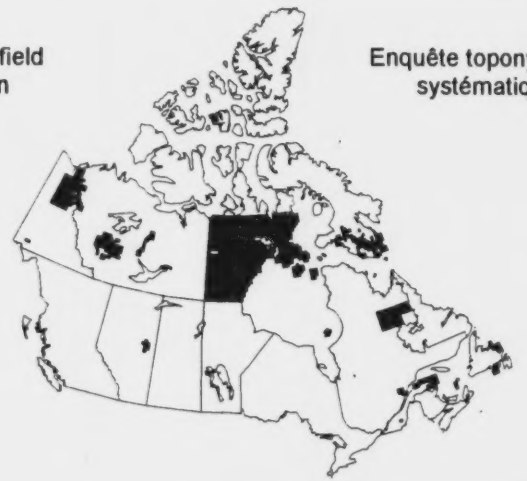
Enquêtes toponymiques sur le terrain terminées

1990 - 1996/97

CPCGN/CPCNG 1997

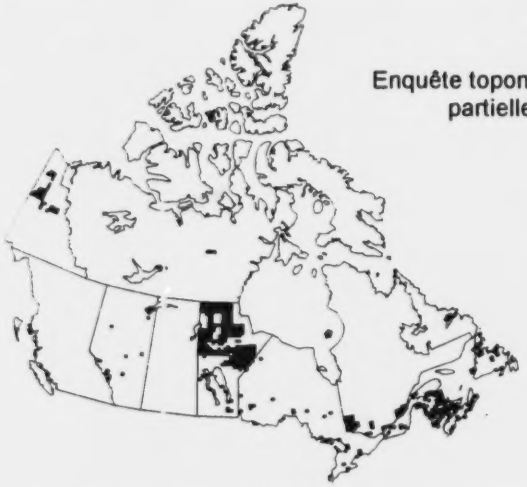
Systematic field collection

Enquête toponymique systématique



Partial field collection

Enquête toponymique partielle



Independently recorded local names

Noms locaux enregistrées de façon indépendante